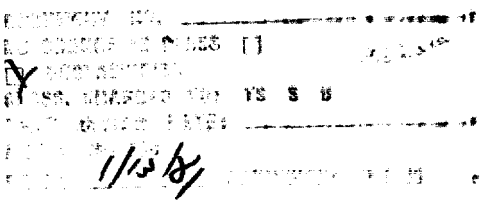
THE GERMAN PROBLEM AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY



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Since the United States assumed leadership of the Free World after World War II, American foreign policy has never lacked critics, both domestic and foreign. Admittedly, no policy is perfect, no diplomat is always right, but American policy can hardly be as defective as its critics allege. There are those who charge that US policy is too erratic and inconsistent, composed largely of ad hoc decisions taken as each new crisis arises. There are equal numbers of critics who complain that it is too inflexible.

It is not possible here to examine every aspect of American foreign policy to determine to what extent which, if either, of these complaints is justified. But whatever may be the situation regarding that policy in some parts of the world, US policy towards Germany has always been consistent. Under two presidents and four secretaries of state, America has pursued a clear, unchanging objective, while remaining flexible enough to adapt to changing events and developments insofar as this has been possible without damaging the basic and ultimate goal.

The US has, since the war, pursued two distinct but related objectives in Germany: (1) to eliminate the vestiges of Nazilism and create a democratic life, and (2) to see a unified German state resume its proper role in the international community. In pursuit of these objectives, the US has sponsored the formation of the Federal Republic, its participation in the European integration movement, and its admission into NATO. Reunification has thus far proved elusive, but US efforts towards its realization continue today as in the past.

The creation of a strong, democratic and united Germany oriented towards, and allied with, the West serves America's own interests. Every country, in the conduct of its foreign policy, seeks to advance its own interests, and America has never claimed to be an exception in this respect.

The United States, however, has not used the reunification issue as a political football. It firmly believes that every nation has an inalienable right to live in unity, and

it will do everything possible to assure that right to every nation deprived of it. At the same time, in the case of Germany, it refuses to sanction the placing of 52 million more people under Soviet tyranny. German reunification could be achieved tomorrow if Bonn and the Western Allies were willing to accept it on Soviet terms.

This idealism, or moralism, which is so often manifested in American foreign policy, also has frequently been the target of attack and criticism. But Americans have no need to be ashamed of it, while the German people, among others, should be profoundly grateful for it. Very shortly after the end of the war, the United States began to take an active part in rebuilding the German economy. Billions of dollars in US aid to Germany were accompanied by heavy investments. At the same time, the American public, gradually overcoming the hostile emotions which had been engendered by the excesses of the Hitler regime and with a generosity and forgiveness unprecedented in history, provided millions of dollars of additional aid through various private agencies. Truly America and Americans have acted towards Germany, to use Abraham Lincoln's words, "with malice toward none; with charity for all...to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace."

The policies which America has consistently followed in the German problem were first laid down in the various agreements made by the Allies at the conclusion of the war. One of the major objectives outlined in these agreements--a general peace settlement with a unified Germany--has still not been achieved 14 years later. Here can be seen the flexibility in American policy. Temporary occupation arrangements have in some cases been allowed to continue, either in original or modified form, in the absence of any agreement among the victorious powers. As a result, present day Germany differs in many important respects from what was envisaged in these agreements.

At this moment when the German problem is once again in the forefront of the international scene, it is useful to review the record of American policy and action on this issue during the postwar years.

The cornerstone of America's German policy has been the Potsdam Protocol, dated 1 August 1945, the stated purpose of which was to achieve a better world in the future and to

secure the peace. In Germany this meant (1) eliminating the vestiges of the Third Reich to prevent the rebirth of aggressive forces, and (2) charting a course of action by which Germany could regain its self respect and play a constructive role in international affairs.

To secure the first objective the Protocol provided certain negative features (demilitarization, denazification, and reparations), while the second--reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis--was to be brought about by establishment of elected local governments, unified administration, democratic rights for all citizens, a balanced economic treatment, and an eventual peace treaty.

Implicit in the Protocol was the promise of eventual unification; and it was specifically provided that "during the period of occupation Germany shall be treated as a single economic unit."

Had US policy, as defined in the basic directive given to General Eisenhower and outlined in the Protocol, prevailed, the German problem would not exist today, at least in its present form. Unfortunately, almost from the outset the Soviet representatives in the Allied Control Council (ACC--the supreme Allied organ for Germany) interposed delays and objections, with the result that the ACC was unable to function. Not only did the Soviets refuse to honor the Potsdam injunction that economic unity was to be observed, but it soon became clear that they had no intention of honoring the other provisions of the Protocol. The Soviets concentrated most of their attention on imposing on the Soviet Zone a dictatorial Communist regime staffed by Party members trained in, and loyal to, Moscow.

Once it became clear that the ACC would be unable to function as expected, America adjusted its policy to the new situation. American occupation authorities proceeded to apply the standards of Potsdam, especially those having reference to laying the foundations for eventual German self-government. The <u>länder</u> (German administrative district analogous to a province) governments instituted at this time were the basis from which the West German Federal Republic developed.

Although the ACC was able to put into effect a series of decrees bearing on the execution of the negative aspects of the Potsdam Protocol, approval of measures to rebuild

Germany and reestablish a minimum economic basis for survival and subsequent democratic government was denied and frustrated by the Soviet Union. This obstructionism, together with the Soviet campaign to impose Communism on its own Zone by force, and the suffering and hopelessness prevalent in Europe and Germany, led Secretary of State James F. Byrnes to make his well-known restatement of US objectives and policies at Stuttgart on 6 September 1946.

Secretary Byrnes asserted that US policy in Germany was guided, in addition to the negative features of the Potsdam Protocol, by a desire and intention to encourage revival in Germany of those elements which would be the best guarantee that Germany would become democratic and follow moderate policies, and to unite the German people into one nation under their own leaders /italics added/. Secretary Byrnes went on to say:

> While we shall insist that Germany observe the principles of peace, good neighborliness, and humanity, we do not want Germany to become the satellite of any power or powers or to live under a dictatorship, foreign or domestic. The American people hope to see peaceful, democratic Germans become and remain free and independent.

The search for an acceptable formula to achieve this goal formed the central theme of the Council of Foreign Ministers' meeting in London from 25 November to 15 December 1947. As in previous East-West negotiations, Soviet intransigence prevented agreement. Basic to the failure of the meeting was a clear-cut fundamental issue between the Soviets and the West: postwar economic recovery in Europe and Germany. The US advanced the Marshall Plan to assure the rehabilitation of Europe into a community of healthy nations in which individuals could live in freedom from the terror of tyranny. The USSR, in contrast, clearly preferred a continuation of the political and economic vacuum in Europe caused by the havoc of war. Therefore, although Marshall Plan aid was offered to Europe as a whole and not just to Western Europe, the Soviet Union refused to participate and also kept out other Eastern European countries, notably Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Even before initiating the Marshall Plan, in which West Germany participated, the US had been trying to reconstruct a healthy German economic life as a basis for the

reconstruction of a democratic political life. Faced with the adamant Soviet refusal to honor the Potsdam injunction that Germany be treated as a single economic unit, the US, first in Bizonia and then in the Federal Republic, undertook not only to reconstruct but to improve the German economy. The aid extended under the early occupation regime and then the Marshall Plan, joined with German capabilities and energies, provided the cornerstone of the present amazing German prosperity and productivity.

Meanwhile, any semblance of Four-Power cooperation in Germany had vanished. The Soviets walked out of the ACC on 20 March 1948 and of the Allied Kommandatura for Berlin on 16 June 1948. The Berlin Blockade followed on 24 June 1948. With the final disappearance of any hope of Soviet cooperation, and alerted by the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, the US and its Allies turned their efforts toward the unification of their own zones of occupation, for which a starting point already existed in Bizonia economic cooperation. Following democratic elections and the adoption of an approved Basic Law, the Federal Republic was formally proclaimed in September 1949. The logical and inevitable conclusion of Allied efforts in this matter came in 1955 when West Germany became a fully sovereign state.

The Cold War and its ramifications made it necessary to develop a cooperative defense against the threat of Soviet aggression, and to encourage moves toward the integration of Europe. The imperative need for a common defense effort in Western Europe to meet the threat of Stalinist Russia resulted in 1949 in the creation of NATO. The outbreak in 1950 of the Korean War, which made even clearer the menace of Soviet aggression, forced the Western powers to the realization that the importance of Germany to the defense of Western Europe was too great to be denied. The eventual result of that realization was the Final Act of the London Nine-Power Conference, 3 October 1954, which not only ended the occupation regime in the Federal Republic but also provided for its association with the West as a full member of NATO and of the Treaty of Western European Union (Brussels Treaty).

The course of these developments was not without its difficulties. Concerned about the possible future threat inherent in any German rearmament even while recognizing the need for it, the French advanced the idea of a European

Defense Community (EDC) as an acceptable formula. This the US readily supported not only because it provided a solution to the problem at hand but also because it was a further step towards European integration. When EDC was rejected by the French Chamber of Deputies, the British, led by Sir Anthony Eden, proposed a compromise which called for admission of Germany to NATO and the creation, under proper safeguards, of a new German military force.

Today the fear of a rebirth of German militarism has faded before the existing danger of Soviet expansionism and the need for German cooperation in Western European defense efforts. The US and her Allies make a sharp distinction between militarism per se and military strength for defensive purposes. Certainly the present West German defense army does not, in American eyes, constitute a cause for fear or suspicion.

The US has confidence that the Bonn government provides adequate guarantees that civilian control of the military establishment will be continued and that an independent General Staff will not again emerge. Additional guarantees are seen in the attitudes of the West German populace and in the firm allegiance to democracy and democratic methods of both major parties--Christian Democratic Union and German Socialist Party--and of their leaders.

The changing political structure of Western Europe itself must also not be overlooked. West Germany is now a respected member of the various supranational and international institutions which are drawing the states of Western Europe closer together--the Coal and Steel Community, Common Market and Euratom, as well as OEEC and the Council of Europe. This has resulted not only from a growing awareness of common interests and problems, but also from wise statesmanship which has been able to overcome ancient enmities and suspicions and to establish trust and understanding between Germany and France, manifested so recently by the Adenauer-de Gaulle meetings.

Aside from all these obstacles to any rebirth of German militarism, there is also the limitation placed on the Federal Republic's capability for independent military action by the subordination of its military forces to the interdependent NATO command structure. There are also the voluntary undertakings of the Federal Chancellor (Protocol No. III of the

revised Brussels Treaty) not to manufacture in the territory of the Federal Republic atomic, biological or chemical weapons, and his renunciation of Germany's right to produce long-range missiles, guided missiles, warships (except for smaller ships for defense purposes), and strategic bombers.

Although the Soviets have seized on West German rearmament and membership in NATO as a pretext for continuing to place obstacles in the way of German reunification, it was the Soviets themselves who first rearmed Germans and who made it necessary for the West Germans to establish their own army. As early as 1948, the Soviets began to create a sizable "police force" in their Zone; and by 1954, a year before an army was established in West Germany, the East German puppet regime--the so-called German Democratic Republic (DDR)--had 140,000 German military personnel under arms plus a police force of 100,000.

In view of this situation, the US and its Allies can hardly accept Soviet protests about the revival of German "militarism" and the danger which the West German defense force poses to Soviet security.

It would be idle to deny that reconciliation of West German membership in NATO with the Soviet Union's neurotic views of its security is a problem which must be solved before reunification will occur. But this should not prove too difficult of solution provided the political aspects of the problem can be resolved.

The record shows that in frequent negotiations with the Soviet Union, it has been US policy, as it has been the policy of her Allies, to press for the unification of Germany based on free elections. This formula the Soviets have consistently and adamantly refused to accept. The Four-Power Directive issued at the conclusion of the 1955 Geneva summit meeting seemed to indicate that the Soviets had at last modified their position on this point. But when the Big Four Foreign Ministers met a few months later to implement the Directive, the proposals presented by the Soviets did not mention reunification, nor would Molotov even discuss the matter.

Despite the lack of progress towards the achievement of reunification and the tremendous obstacles which appear in the way, the US still views reunification as a primary

objective of its German policy. It stands willing to do anything it can to accomplish that goal; anything, that is, short of selling out the Germans. The Soviets are always willing to accept reunification on their own terms, i.e., delivery of the 52 million West Germans into the hands of the Communists. But neither the US, Bonn nor the other Western Allies will ever agree to such a tragedy.

Neither is the United States willing, nor does it intend, to abandon West Berlin, that outpost of freedom and prosperity in the midst of a sea of East German Communist dictatorship and economic hardship. Acceptance of Khrushchev's plan for a so-called "free" city is, therefore, impossible. Once Western troops were pulled out of Berlin, the sector's eventual absorption by the DDR would be inevitable. In view of the USSR's past record of keeping promises, Soviet pledges that this would not occur are hardly likely to be given much credence by the West.

It would be futile to speculate on what the outcome of the present Berlin crisis will be. Suffice it to say that Berlin is simply one aspect, albeit today the most prominent one, of the German problem in its entirety, which primarily involves the well-known questions of reunification, European security and a general peace treaty. On all these points the US Government is today, as it has been in the past, ready to negotiate with the Soviets. The American note to the USSR of 30 September 1958 perhaps is the best summation of the US position:

> The Government of the United States is ready at any time to enter into discussions with the Soviet Government on the basis of these proposals /free all-German elections and free decisions for an all-German Government/, or of any other proposals genuinely designed to insure the reunification of Germany in freedom, in any appropriate forum. It regards the solution of the German problem as essential if a lasting settlement in Europe is to be achieved.

The most recent events make it certain that, barring unforeseen developments, an East-West Foreign Ministers' meeting will take place in May, to be followed by a summit meeting later in the summer. At the present moment one can only speculate on the probable agendas and results of those meetings. It can be assumed, however, that the US will continue a policy designed to reunify Germany and preserve the peace.